2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Saramaccaner

man of each tribe has a uniform given him by the Dutch; it 648
consists of a high silk hat, a braided frock coat, a drum-major's baton, and a metal plaque suspended around the neck, with the arms of Surinam on it. The ensemble is picturesque in the extreme. Captains have uniforms, too, but less ornate ones. The great full-dress occasion is the palaver at Paramaribo, held on or about the Queen's birthday, toward the end of August. This is an occasion of festivity throughout the colony.

The Governor receives the Bush Negro chiefs as he would any foreign ambassadors, and the dignity of these men, the aristocracy of their bearing, cannot be exceeded by white plenipotentiaries. There is one difference: most of the Djuka females remain at home. Indeed, Jankoeso has forbidden his daughters to go to Paramaribo on any occasion whatsoever. He himself must make a pilgrimage to the sacred medicine city of Dahomey in preparation for the trip, at which time he undergoes a purifying ritual at the hands of the high [783 obeiah priests, to muster good obeiahs for a salubrious passage. 713]

The only attempt of the Dutch to exercise any authority over the Bush Negroes is in regard to the burial ceremony. This has been a bone of contention for many years. The 648
Djuka custom is to allow the corpse to remain unburied for 764
a long period. The Dutch tried to stop this, not from any desire to interfere with the customs of the natives, but for sanitary reasons. The disagreement was finally compromised by a time limit of three days between death and burial. This regulation is usually not observed. Once they get back into
their remote villages, the Bush Negroes do as they please.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

drums carry farther toward heaven than the talkee-talkee of a lone supplicant.

It is not easy to distinguish between the primitive's magic and his medicine. In the village organization a distinction is sometimes made between the *medicine man*, who is concerned with remedies for sickness, and the *obeiah priest*, whose business is charms and rituals. There are two or three obeiah priests to each village. Their profession is the propitiation of spirits, that is, magic and religion. The magic of the obeiah men is largely secret. Once we arrived at a village while a ritual of some nature was going on. Pots were stewing in the centre of the clearing, while obeiah men were moving around them. One held a rattle, which he shook monotonously. The bahkra was asked to leave. It was magic in the making.

The Bush Negroes possess an extensive system of primitive medicine. Various roots, herbs, and nuts are gathered in the jungle, and their use is mingled with various superstitions. The witch doctor or medicine man who prepares infusions from these herbs holds no exalted position in the esteem of the villagers; he is simply following a particular profession to which no special prestige is attached. He may, however, be an obeiah priest in addition to being a medicine man.

He prepares several kinds of medicine, among them the *snakee-kutti*, or snake-bite cure. It cures the bites of all reptiles and makes the person immune from future attack. Snakee-kutti is made in this way: a venomous snake is killed and the head and the tail-end are cut from the body; the tail

/509 cont./
October 1958 – January 1959), expeditions whose principal aim was the sociological study of these populations.

/510/

Social Structure and Way of Life

The Boni Refugee Blacks. The Boni are one of the above-mentioned tribes of the Refugee Blacks, reconstituted in the course of the eighteenth century by rebel African slaves who escaped from Surinam plantations (Dutch Guiana).

These tribes (Saramaka, Djuka, Paramaka, Boni) live for the most part along the rivers of the interior of Surinam. They group together a total of 25,000 persons.

With very rare exceptions, the Refugee Blacks are pure Africans. These populations, vigorous and well adapted to the country, have experienced in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a remarkable demographic increase, attested to by all the authors. Descended from small rebel groups which could not have contained more than a few hundred women, they are now estimated at more than 25,000 persons.

The Boni of the Upper Maroni, the subject of the present study, number approximately 800, of whom 660 are on the French bank (the villages of Boniville, l'Enfant Perdu, Loka, Asisi, Papaliton, and Kormotibo) and 140 on the Surinam bank (the village of Kotika). These villages were established long ago.

Each of them groups together a matrilineage, i.e., the descendants in the uterine line of one single founding ancestress; certain villages know their genealogy in its entirety back to this ancestress, who must have lived at the end of the eighteenth century. The members of the lineage are united by the cult of the ancestor, which binds them firmly to their natal village and to their land. The social system is based essentially on this cult, the chief of the village being above all the priest of the ancestors.

Strictly speaking, there is no marriage, but only an acknowledged concubinage which entails neither a contract between the

/66 cont./

613 554 The small, recently founded lineages attached to a lo each designate a head: for example, the Afi lineage has Awéni as head. But this head remains subject to the authority of the captain of the lo and his office has no official existence.

/67/ The appointment is made by a council - kuutu - of the lineage, but it is not valid until endorsed by the grand man.

[717] When the deceased captain did not, while living, designate any successor, his yɔɔka is interrogated in order to know whom he prefers. That does not have the force of law but can influence the council.

The council meets several days after the end of mourning for the deceased captain. All the male members of the lineage, regardless of age, give their opinion. Strictly speaking, they do not vote: but the nomination is considered valid only if three-quarters of those present are in agreement. If not, they disband without having decided anything, and the lineage can remain without a head for years. On this topic can be cited the example of the Awara Bakka lo, which remained without a head from 1935 (?) to 1953, until the appointment of Kondulu. During this time the [643] grand man had designated Captain Popo, head of the Lapé lineage, to secure the interim. As for the religious functions, they were taken care of by the joyen of the lineage.

The captain has the following functions within the lineage:

1) He is ɔɔ̀ɔ̀ of the ancestor worship and ɔɔ̀ɔ̀sides over [795] the ɔɔ̀ɔ̀yers and offerings made before the fraga tiki. In this duty [769] he is replaced in case of absence by the oldest man of the lineage.

In case of the death of a member of the lineage from the [761] effect of the kuno, the captain convokes all his people in order [782] to proceed to collective ɔɔ̀ɔ̀yers and offerings intended to appease the gods:

/12 cont./

643 798 241 The grand man acts as land head for the whole of the tribe. It is he who has the care of the sanctuary of mama gɔ̃ and who prays each year in the presence of a large gathering of people for the fertility of the soil.

643 743 796 982 The grand man is the priest of Odun, divinity whom the Boni regard as avenger of offenses against moral and religious law; by virtue of this, he alone is qualified to administer the oath against wɔ̃i (sorcery) and to implore the mercy of Odun toward those who have gone against his laws by fighting with arms.

643 152 In his religious functions this usually weak and unobtrusive man acts with sovereign authority and assurance, and we have several times seen people tremble before him.

643 681 [723] If someone has seriously transgressed the customary laws, or if he has stolen, committed adultery, given blows, poured forth serious insults or curses, the grand man inflicts on him punishment proportional to the gravity of the offense, such as making planks, /13/ a boat, pounding rice (if it is a woman). The product of the punishment is acquired by the grand man, as are the fines in money which he imposes in less serious cases.

643 685 For example in October, 1952, two adolescents of Bonïville, Awétipay and Adyuka, were surprised while they were trying to break into an inhabited house; the grand man sentenced them forthwith to three days of forced labor, in the course of which he made them clean the approaches to the village and collect for his benefit wood for heating.

643 689 422 He can also punish disobedient or disrespectful young men by making them do work reserved for women, such as weeding the approaches to the village and the removal of dog droppings.

643 681 The grand man can confine a man to Boni villages by forbidding him to go beyond l'Enfant Perdu to the north and Kormotibo to the south; that is called sitafu sama (sitafu • captive). The man concerned, deprived of means of earning his living, thus becomes dependent on his family until he makes honorable amends.

/259 cont./

791 to the god, and their words of thanks lasted scarcely half a
[782] minute (1). At the time of our first trip on the Maroni, in

1. Yet custom expressly provides for this rite of thanking.

1948, the same scenes had unfolded, going as well as coming back.

241 791

Rites Relative to Agriculture

These rites occupy a relatively minor place in the religious life of the Refugee Blacks, which may be attributed to the great regularity of the climate and the absence of calamities affecting the yield of crops.

[613] It does not seem, at least among the Boni, that a religious bond is assumed between the lineage and the land, and rites intended to insure the fertility of the soil are carried out by each one for himself in the neighborhood of his own field; the lineage head does not appear to play any particular role in this regard. In the thought of the Boni, the fertility of the
241 792 soil depends upon a local divinity, to which is offered de facto worship; the temporary or permanent users of the lands situated in the domain of this god perform on their own behalf the rites of this worship without any distinction of origin, whether they are Boni, Djuka, or Saramaka.

[796] The only collective worship existing in Boni country is
793 the worship of mama gɔ̃, of which the grand man is priest.
[643] Its rites are limited to a short annual prayer.